

APPLICATION FOR
UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

FOR

CARRIER FOR FOOTWEAR

By:

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

The present invention relates to carriers for footwear, and in particular to a method and
5 apparatus for transporting shoes.

2. Description of Related Art

This invention relates to ropes and straps, more particularly, as applied to shoes.
Presently, most athletes before and after a game or practice will tie the shoe laces together and
10 carry the shoes over his or her shoulders to minimize wear and to keep from misplacing the
shoes. Several problems arise as a result of this practice. For one, this practice accelerates the
wear and tear on the shoe laces. Another problem is it time consuming to tie the shoes together.
Also, it is cumbersome to have the shoes tied together by the shoelaces and dangling over one's
shoulder. The shoes are often tied closely together and lay too close to the upper portion of one's
15 shoulder. When the shoes need to be worn again, the athlete must untie the shoe laces before
putting the shoe on his or her foot, which is a time consuming process.

Donovan, United States Patent No. 4,867,359, discloses an apparatus for carrying boots
which includes a shoulder strap and adjustable stirrup straps at each end. The adjustable ankle
strap is fastened to each stirrup strap to hold a pair of ski boots securely to be carried with one
20 ski boot in front and one ski boot on the back of the user. While the Donovan device allows the
user to carry the boots without the use of hands, it is bulky, cumbersome and time consuming to
set up for carrying and it doesn't readily apply for athletic shoes.

Cousins, United States Patent No. 4,483,470 relates to a convertible sling-belt for carrying a pair of roller skates which includes a strap, a pair of snapper clamps, and mating buckling members. While the snapper clamps attached to the strap are adapted to clamp onto a boot or skate, the snapper clamps are clumsy and are prone to snagging with clothes. The
5 snapper clamps are also unattractive and obtrusive.

Thus, what is needed is an expedient and simple means for carrying shoes without a cumbersome or bulky strap and without a time consuming setup.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a convenient and easy means for carrying the shoes before or after use. Another object of the invention is to provide a simple
10 means for connecting the shoes to facilitate the transport of the shoes. One other object of the present invention is to provide a handy and easy means for disconnecting the shoes to allow for expedient insertion of the shoes on the user's feet as needed.

Other objects of the present invention will be apparent in light of the following disclosure.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a convenient and efficient carrier for shoes which overcomes the limitations associated with prior shoe carriers. The shoe carrier of the present invention further allows for a discreet apparatus for connecting and disconnecting the connecting
5 strap which ties the pair of shoes together and allows for transport.

In accordance with one aspect of the invention, one end of a connecting strap is attached to each shoe. The connecting strap is attached to the shoes by a securing member and a quick release member. The quick release member acts as a quick release to the securing member, in
10 other words, the quick release member can attach and separate, when necessary, to the securing member quickly and efficiently. The connection between the securing member and quick release member is sturdy enough to hold the shoes during transport but the connection is not permanent.

The quick release member is permanently attached to the end of the connecting strap
15 while the securing member is permanently affixed to the shoe. The securing member can be permanently affixed to the shoe by hand and can be affixed anywhere on the shoe where feasible. The securing member has a tool portion that can create a hole allowing for the securing member to be permanently inserted into the shoe. The securing member also has a receiving barrel portion that, once the securing member is in the shoe, is exposed and accessible for
20 attaching to the quick release member.

After the connecting strap is connected to the shoes through the securing member and quick release member, the housing member can be attached to the connecting strap. The

housing member provides for comfortable handling of the connecting strap for transporting the shoes.

When the shoes are ready to be worn again, the connecting strap can be readily disconnected from the shoes. The disconnection is made by pulling the quick release member
5 away from the securing member and with one click the disconnection is complete and the shoes are ready for use. The shoe carrier can then be folded neatly and placed in a small container or gym bag.

It is a technical advantage of the present invention that shoes can be transported in a convenient and efficient manner. It is a further technical advantage that the time for connecting
10 the shoes to prepare for transport is reduced. It is a still further advantage of the present invention that the shoes can be quickly and readily disconnected to allow for expedient insertion of shoes on user's feet.

The foregoing and other objectives, features and advantages of the present invention will be more readily understood upon consideration of the following detailed description of the
15 invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended
5 claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and
advantages thereof, will be best understood by reference to the following detailed description of
illustrative embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an elevation view of the shoe carrier embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 is an elevation view of the securing member, quick release member and the
10 connecting strap of the shoe carrier, with the securing member unattached to the quick release
member;

Figure 3 is an elevation view of the securing member, quick release member and the
connecting strap of the shoe carrier with the securing member attached to the quick release
member; and

15 **Figure 4** is an elevation front view and elevation back view of the shoe carrier shown in
Figure 1 with the connecting strap connected to a pair of shoes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which may
5 be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed structure.

In **Figures 1-4**, like items are identified by like and corresponding numerals for ease of
10 reference. Referring now to the drawings, in **Figure 1** a shoe carrier **34** embodying the present invention is shown attached to a pair of shoes **30** and **32**. The first shoe **30** is connected to second shoe **32** by any appropriate method which will be subsequently described in greater detail. The shoe carrier **34** is shown in the front view. The shoe carrier **34** comprises a connecting strap **18** having two ends, a pair of securing members **24** and **26**, a pair of quick
15 release members **20** and **22** and a housing member **28**. As shown, the shoes **30** and **32** are ready for transporting.

Referring to **Figure 2**, the securing member **24** and **26** includes a tool portion **2** and **4** and a receiving barrel portion **6** and **8**. The tool portion **2** and **4** is adaptable for creating a hole in the shoe **30** and **32**, to allow for permanently inserting the securing member **24** and **26** into the shoe
20 **30** and **32**, also seen in **Figure 1**. In one embodiment, the tool portion of the securing member bores an opening in the heel of the shoe with the opening big enough to allow the securing member entry. Once the securing member **24** and **26** is inserted firmly into the shoe **30** and **32**,

the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 will be firmly affixed to the shoe 30 and 32 and can be accessible for receiving the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12. In one embodiment, not shown, the tool portion 2 and 4 of the securing member 24 and 26 bores an opening in the sole of the shoe 30 and 32, then the securing member 24 and 26 can be inserted into the shoe 30 and 32, with the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 affixed to the shoe 30 and 32 and accessible for receiving the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12.

In another embodiment, not shown, the shoe 30 and 32 is fabricated, at the factory, with the securing member 24 and 26 in the shoe 30 and 32 such that the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 is part of the shoe and is accessible for receiving the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12. Thus, the user does not need to attach the securing member 24 and 26 to shoe 30 and 32 because the shoe 30 and 32 has the securing member 24 and 26 already inserted in the shoe 30 and 32 at the point of purchase.

The quick release member 20 and 22 includes an engaging barrel portion 10 and 12 and a heel barrel portion 14 and 16. The engaging barrel portion 10 and 12 is adaptable for connecting and disconnecting to the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8. The receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 receives and connects to the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12 with a detent. The connection between the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 and the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12 is strong enough to hold the shoes 30 and 32 during transport, but the disconnection can be made easily by pulling apart the receiving barrel portion 6 and 8 and the engaging barrel portion 10 and 12.

At the bottom of the quick release member 20 and 22 is the heel barrel portion 14 and 16, which is permanently affixed to the end of the connecting strap 18. The quick release member 20 and 22 and the securing member 24 and 26 can be seen in the disconnected position.

Figure 3 shows the quick release member **20** and **22** connected to the securing member **24** and **26** with the receiving barrel portion **6** and **8** enclosing the engaging barrel portion **10** and **12**. Thus, in the connected position, the engaging barrel portion **10** and **12** is out of view. As seen in **Figure 1**, in the connected position, the engaging barrel portion **10** and **12** and the securing member **24** and **26** is out of view, with the tool portion **2** and **4** and the receiving barrel portion **6** and **8** inserted into the shoes **30** and **32**.

Referring now to **Figure 4**, a front view **Figure 4a** and back view **Figure 4b** of the shoe carrier **34** is shown with the housing member **28** attached to the connecting strap **18**. The front view illustrates the front view of the housing member **28** while the back view shows the back of the housing member **28**. The connecting strap **18**, the securing member **24** and **26** and the quick release member **20** and **22** do not have a front and a back view as the connecting strap **18**, securing member **24** and **26**, and quick release member **20** and **22** are cylindrical. In one embodiment, the connecting strap is comprised of rope material. In another embodiment, not shown, the connecting strap is comprised of elastic, bungee-like material. In yet another embodiment, not shown, the connecting strap is comprised of plastic cord material.

The housing member **28** is adaptable for detaching and attaching to the connecting strap **18**. The housing member **28** can be attached by simply clicking the housing member **28** onto the connecting strap **18**. Likewise, the housing member **28** can be detached by pulling the housing member **28** away from the connecting strap **18** while holding the connecting strap **18** in place.

In one embodiment, the housing member **28** is rectangular shaped as shown in **Figures 1** and **4**, to provide for comfortable gripping by hand during transport. The housing member **28** can clip on and off and slide along the connecting strap **18** to allow for varying the effective

length of the connecting strap 18.

In another embodiment, not shown, housing member 28 is shaped like a sleeve and is enclosing the connecting strap 18 and providing a comfortable padding for placing the connecting strap 18 over the shoulder during transport. The housing member 28 shaped like a sleeve is adaptable for detaching and attaching to the connecting strap 18. The housing member 28 has a zipper for fastening onto the connecting strap 18, the zipper offers a quick means for fastening the housing member 28 onto the connecting strap 18.

In yet another embodiment, not shown, the housing member 28 is shaped like a sleeve enclosing the connecting strap 18 and has a pair of snaps for fastening onto the connecting strap 18. If the shoe carrier 34 is to be used for a lengthy distance and without employing hands, the housing member 28 shaped like a sleeve enclosing the connecting strap 18 can be used by simply hanging the shoe carrier 34 over the shoulder. Otherwise, for shorter distances, the housing member 28 as shaped like a rectangular as in Figures 1 and 4 can be utilized.

The quick release assembly of the present invention may be used to fasten and carry or bind together any number items, such as a cell phone and its case, a pair of skis, and the like. Using the assembly of the present invention others pairs of items, besides fishing, may be tied together for storage and conveyance.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.